

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 SAM-01 SAB-01 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SR-02 ORM-03

DRC-01 /140 W

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R 200538Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3222

INFO AMEMBSSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBSSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AAVIV 4086

LONDON FOR GLEYSTEN

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION: COLAITION TALKS SUSPENDED

REF: TEL AVIV 3904

1. SUMMARY. LABOR-MAPAM ALIGNMENT JULY 16 DECIDED TO DEFER TALKS ON PROPOSALS FOR NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY JOINING COALITION ON BASIS OF COMPROMISE FORMULA ON WHO IS A JEW. WHILE INITIAL NRP REPSONES HOLDS THA DECISION CONSTITUTES BREAKDOWN OF CONTACTS TO ENLARGE COALTION, IT IS LIKELY THAT DISCUSSIONS WILL BE RESUMED LATER THIS YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. IN REPORTEDLY STORMY LABOR ALIGNMENT MEETING JULY 16, PRIME MINISTER RABIN TOOK DECISIVE POSITION THAT CHIEF RABBI
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GOREN'S COMPROMISE FORMULA IS NOT YET"RIPE ENOUGH" FOR FORM

BASIS FOR TALKS WITH NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY REGARDING ITS ENTRY INTO GOVERNING COALITION. HE WARNED THAT, UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, EFFORTS TO ENLARGE COALITION WOULD ENDANGER STABILITY OF CURRENT GOVERNMENT.

3. RABIN'S POSITION IS BASED ON HIS CONCERN THAT BOTH CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND INDEPENDENT LIBERAL PARTY WOULD QUIT COALITION IF LABOR PARTY AGREED TO GOREN'S PROPOSED COMPROMISE FORMUL. MAPAM ALSO HAS SHOWN DETERMINED OPPOSITION TO MAKING CONCESSIONS TO NRP ON RELIGIOUS ISSUES, ARGUING THAT ALL CURRENTS OF WORLD JEWRY MUST AGREE TO ANY NEW PROPOSALS ON CONVERSION ISSUE. MOREOVER, SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER, ALTHOUGH NOT MAJORITY, OF LABOR PARTY KNESSET MEMBERS ALSO OPPOSED CONCESSIONS TO NRP.

4. NRP REACTION HAS BEEN EXPECTEDLY RAPID AND SHARP. NRP LEADERSHIP IS CLEARLY ANGERED AT REBUFF AND IN RESPONSE HAS STATED THAT LABOR PARTY DECISION REPRESENTS FINAL RUPTURE OF CONTACTS TO ENLARGE COALITION. HARDLINE NRP MK YEHUDA BEN-MERI SAID THAT NRP MUST NOW ORGANIZE ITSELF FOR ITS TRUE ROLE, TO TOPPLE RABIN GOVERNMENT. NRP KNESSET CAUCUS HAS ISSUED STATEMENT STATING THAT LABOR LEADERSHIP WAS SO WEAK THAT IT HAD TO "BOW TO THE DICTATES OF ANTI-RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS AND CIRCLES WHICH WERE HASTENING TO MAKE DANGEROUS AND FAR-REACHING POLITICAL CONCESSIONS."

5. NRP SECRETARY GENERAL ALSO UNDERSCORED IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT RIFT FOR CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE OF FUTURE OF WEST BANK. "IT NOW APPEARS CLEAR THAT THE REAL ISSUE IS NOT RELIGIOUS BUT POLITICAL. FOR IT IS TRUE THAT THE NRP IN THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HELP THE SIDE WHICH WANTS ERETZ YISRAEL TO REMAIN UNDIVIDED."

6. GENERAL EXPECTATION OF OUR CONTACTS IS THAT, DESPITE CURRENT NRP FUROR, INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS FOR COALITION ENLARGEMENT ARE LIKELY TO BE RESUMED IN MONTHS AHEAD. HOWEVER, PROSPECTS FOR NRP RETURN TO COALITION PRESENTLY SEEM RATHER BLEAK. NRP APPEARS TO BE CAUGHT BETWEEN ITS EAGERNESS TO RE-ACQUIRE INFLUENCE AND PATRONAGE ON ONE HAND AND ITS COMMITMENT TO RABBINATE TO HOLD LINE
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ON RELIGIOUS ISSUE ON OTHER. HARDLINE ELEMENTS WITHIN NRP WILL DOUBTLESS EXPLOIT CURRENT RIFT TO TRY TO PUSH PARTY FIRMLY INTO OPPOSITION CAMP. AT SAME TIME, THOSE WITHIN LABOR ALIGNMENT WHO WANT TO KEEP NRP OUT OF COALITION ALSO SEEM TO HAVE UPPER HAND. PROCESS OF ALIENATION, ONCE BEGUN, HAS MOMENTUM OF ITS OWN AND WILL BE DIFFICULT TO REVERSE.

7. LABOR LEADERSHIP AND RABBI GOOREN APPEAR TO HAVE HANDLED

ENTIRE MATTER POORLY, PARTICULARLY BY ALLOW NEGOTIATING
PSOTISON TO SURFACE PREMATURELY IN PRESS BEFORE INTERNAL
CONSENSUS COULD BE ATTAINED. APPARENT LABOR ALIGNMENT-NRP
RIFT IS PRECISELY WHAT RABIN HAD HOPED TO AVERT.

8. COMMENT. RELIGIOUS ISSUE--MAINLY WHO IS A JEW
QUESTION--WILL CONTINUE TO BE DIVISIVE, CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC, AND
TO SOME EXTENT MAY DEFLECT RABIN GOVERNEMTN FROM DEALING
VIGOROUSLY WITH WIDE RANGE OF MORE CURCIAL ISSUES FACING ISRAEL.
CURRENT RIFT, HOWEVER DOES NOT REPEAT NOT ENDANGER SURVIVAL
OF RABIN GOVERNMENT.
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